



A Program with the
Colorado Attorney General
and the AARP Foundation



Colorado Attorney General
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The Verdict: Not Guilty of Identity Disclosure

Jury duty scams have been around for years but have seen a resurgence in recent months. It's a simple scam that goes like this:

The phone rings, you pick it up, and the caller identifies himself as an officer of the court. He claims you failed to report for jury duty and that a warrant is out for your arrest. You state that you never received a notice. To clear it up, the caller says he'll need some information for "verification purposes" - your birth date, social security number, and maybe even a credit card number. Give out this information and bingo, your identity has just been stolen.

The jury duty scam works on the victim's emotions. The shock of being told they are about to be arrested will place most people off guard and less vigilant about protecting their personal information. This scam is particularly dangerous given the intimidation factor inherent in speaking with someone who represents (supposedly) the court system.

The jury duty scam is another variation of the personal information gathering game that has become the identity thief's preferred mode of prey. Scammers might tap your information to make a purchase on your credit card, but could just as easily sell your information to the highest bidder on the Internet's black market.

Real U.S. court officials want you to know that the courts never ask for any personal information over the telephone. In reality, courts typically follow up with prospective and no-show jurors by conventional mail, rarely, if ever, by telephone.

Bottom line: Never give out personal information when you receive an unsolicited phone call.

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